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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an account of the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa from July 2017 to June 2018.

During that period, the Centre continued to assist Member States, at their request, and intergovernmental and civil society organizations in Africa to promote peace, security, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control of conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction. The Centre also implemented its communication strategy by developing information and outreach material and by proactively reaching out to stakeholders to help to promote peace and disarmament.

In response to the continued challenge to peace, security and stability posed by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the region, in particular in Central Africa and the Sahel, the Centre focused its work on providing assistance to Member States to control small arms and light weapons and improve the physical security and stockpile management of weapons and ammunition through capacity-building for civilian authorities, including government officials, parliamentarians and national commissions on small arms and light weapons, defence and security forces and United Nations peacekeeping mission personnel. The Centre supported States' efforts to prevent the diversion of such weapons, in particular to non-State armed groups and terrorist groups, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). It also provided assistance in the implementation of instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Council resolution 1540 (2004), and facilitated regional dialogue among Member States on issues relevant to banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. More than 600 persons from 35 African Member States participated directly in those capacity-building activities, while additional stakeholders from all African Member States benefited indirectly from the Centre's activities.

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The Centre continued to provide substantive support on disarmament issues to the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at their ministerial and governmental expert meetings.

The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to those Member States and other institutions that made financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre, enabling it to fulfil its mandate, and calls upon all Member States and other stakeholders to continue to make contributions to enhance its activities and impact towards saving lives, in pursuance of Sustainable Development Goal 16, on the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Secretary-General is particularly thankful to the Government of Togo for providing new office premises to help the Centre to expand its activities and personnel to better assist Member States in addressing evolving challenges to human security in the region and for its long-standing support, as host country, for the Centre for the past 32 years.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/60, by which the Secretary-General was requested to report on the activities of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. The report covers the period from July 2017 to June 2018. The financial statement of the trust fund for the Centre for 2017 is provided in the annex.

2. The General Assembly, by that resolution, commended the Centre for its sustained support to Member States in implementing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control activities through seminars and conferences, capacity-building and training, policy and technical expertise, and information and advocacy at the regional and national levels and welcomed its contribution to disarmament, peace and security across the continent.

II. Functioning and mandate

3. The Centre was established in 1986 in Lomé pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G. It functions on the basis of existing resources within the Secretariat and voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors.

4. The Centre carries out its programme of work in the following main areas: peace and security; conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons; weapons of mass destruction; information and outreach; and cooperation and partnerships with regional and subregional organizations and other entities.

III. Main activities

5. During the reporting period, the Centre provided support and technical assistance to Member States in Africa to promote disarmament, peace and security through capacity-building and training programmes, practical measures, advocacy, research and information-sharing. The Centre worked in partnership with the African Union and African regional organizations, other intergovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions and civil society organizations in the implementation of its programmes, projects and other activities. In the light of the specific nature of security and disarmament issues in Africa, the Centre continued to place emphasis on activities aimed at preventing the illicit trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

6. The Centre continued to raise awareness among African Member States on issues relating to weapons of mass destruction, in particular by providing technical advice and assisting in the implementation of international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors.

A. Peace and security

7. The Centre provided substantive support to the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa at its forty-fifth and forty-sixth ministerial meetings, held in Rwanda in December 2017 and in the Congo in June 2018, respectively. The Centre updated the 11 States members of the

Committee on developments in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation at the international, regional and subregional levels and on international and regional efforts to promote and support the implementation of disarmament instruments.

8. The Centre contributed to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2178 (2014) through a project providing regional support to the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force. In that resolution, the Council condemned violent extremism while calling upon States to take the measures necessary to prevent flows of national and foreign terrorist fighters, in addition to emphasizing the need for capacity-building and technical support to combat violent extremism and the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The project, jointly funded by Switzerland and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre, consisted of technical assistance to the four Lake Chad basin countries (Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria), with support to strengthen their legal and judicial frameworks, an inter-institutional training course and national and regional capacity-building workshops.

9. The final phase of the project, featuring workshops on arms marking procedures, was also an occasion to raise awareness among governmental and civil society experts of international arms control norms, standards and best practices that could assist the beneficiary States in preventing the acquisition of arms and ammunition by terrorists or terrorist groups, including foreign terrorist fighters. Two workshops were organized according to language groups: 25 government officials and military officers from Cameroon, Chad and the Niger attended a workshop in N'Djamena, on 6 and 7 November 2017, while 18 Nigerian civilian and military personnel participated in a training workshop in Abuja on 8 and 9 November. The participants came from the ministries responsible for the interior, foreign affairs, defence, justice, customs and immigration, the armed forces and civil society organizations. It is suggested that additional activities be conducted to further capitalize on the training manual and expertise accumulated by the Centre in the implementation of the first phase of the project, which would help the Centre to consolidate the gains of this pilot project, including by utilizing the network of experts and participants who participated in the inter-institutional training course on combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in Africa. Subject to additional funding, the Centre could conduct further training courses and related activities in the Lake Chad basin countries, including by providing support to strengthen existing regional or national training centres.

10. From 18 to 20 December 2017, the Centre organized in Lomé a capacity-building workshop to promote gender perspectives in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control processes in the Lake Chad basin. In total, 16 national experts, including 14 women, participated in the workshop, under the framework of a project to mainstream gender perspectives in preventing the acquisition of arms and ammunitions by terrorist groups in the Lake Chad basin, funded by the Government of Sweden. The project was developed to support the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, 2349 (2017) on peace and security in Africa and 2370 (2017) on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, in addition to General Assembly resolution 71/56 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The project's purpose is to increase the participation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict resolution and support the achievement of target 16.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is aimed at significantly reducing illicit arms flows by 2030. During the three-day workshop, representatives of the four Lake Chad basin countries and experts from civil society deliberated on the relevance of the involvement of women in efforts to combat the proliferation of arms and ammunition, enhancing the capacity

of civil society actors to effectively incorporate gender perspectives into disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control processes in the Lake Chad region.

11. To foster effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration policies and practices, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research developed a joint project on effective weapons and ammunition management in a changing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration context. From 25 to 30 June 2018, and following a series of preparatory technical workshops by experts from the Centre, the Department and the Institute, the Centre hosted a one-week pilot training course for 25 disarmament, demobilization and reintegration practitioners from the United Nations peacekeeping missions and other relevant institutions. The practical portion of the training was focused on elements of weapons and ammunition management, supported by a handbook accompanying the project, which was developed jointly by the Office and the Department and with financial support from the Governments of Germany and Switzerland. Part of the training was held at the facilities of the Training Centre for Post-Conflict Demining and Clearance in Ouidah, Benin, as part of the Centre's approach to strengthening the capacities of national and regional institutions dealing with peace, arms control and disarmament.

B. Small arms and light weapons

12. At the Sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 6 to 10 June 2016, Member States noted the importance of the adequate management of national small arms and light weapons stockpiles, including sustainable life-cycle management, to minimize the risk of diversion, including through theft, loss and unauthorized re-export, of small arms and light weapons to illicit markets, illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized recipients; to prevent accidental explosions and protect the environment; and to improve the control, storage and record-keeping of small arms and light weapons. Under that framework, the Council of the European Union adopted Decision 2014/912/CFSP, funding a 36-month project in support of physical security and stockpile management activities to reduce the risk of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition in the Sahel region, to be implemented by the Office for Disarmament Affairs through the Centre. The project was launched in June 2015 and will be completed by December 2018. It assists six States in the Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Nigeria, to prevent the diversion of and illicit trafficking in government-owned small arms and light weapons and their ammunition by improving their physical security and stockpile management.

13. Participants also received training on best practices with regard to inventory organization, warehousing and inventory management, procedures for selection of staff and training and the fundamental principles of physical security. During the reporting period, 47 government officials and parliamentarians in the six beneficiary countries were briefed on the critical importance of physical security and stockpile management, while 85 officers of the defence and security forces received expert support to develop national standard operating procedures compliant with the International Small Arms Control Standards and the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines and other complementary instruments developed by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other relevant actors. Meanwhile, 15 secured storage facilities, including 5 mobile facilities, were constructed in the beneficiary countries with the support of the Mine Action Service of the United Nations and the Mine Action Support Group. The

implementing partners provided further hands-on training to 300 armoury storekeepers and managers responsible for the installations.

14. To facilitate the participation of African States in the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 18 to 29 June, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, through the Centre, organized in Lomé, from 9 to 13 April, a series of regional preparatory meetings for African Member States, with financial support from the European Union. Participants had the opportunity to interact with those giving presentations and to share views and experiences of implementing the Programme of Action at the national and subregional levels. Various topics were discussed, including preventing the diversion of small arms and light weapons, ammunition management, regional and subregional instruments, coordination, transparency and synergies, recent developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design and resulting challenges and opportunities for the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The meeting for West and Central African States was held on 10 and 11 April and the meeting for East and Southern African States on 12 and 13 April 2018.

15. In the area of new technology, the Centre shared its expertise in arms control-related software development and database design and provided technical advice to ECOWAS during an expert meeting on the establishment of the ECOWAS Small Arms and Light Weapons Register and Database, organized by the ECOWAS Commission in January 2018 in Abuja.

16. The Centre received financial support from the United Nations peace and development trust fund to assist Central African States in effectively implementing the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (Kinshasa Convention). The Centre, jointly with the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, engaged with the Economic Community of Central African States and its 11 member States to secure their endorsement and agree on the project schedule. In addition to capacity-building workshops, an implementation guide for the Kinshasa Convention will be developed and disseminated as a key deliverable of the project.

C. Weapons of mass destruction

17. The Centre, with financial support from the Government of Canada, supported the preparation and organization of a workshop on 14 and 15 March in Lomé to facilitate the participation of French-speaking African States in the high-level fissile material cut-off treaty expert preparatory group consultative process. The goal of the workshop was to enable dialogue among those States on the implications of a future treaty and its relationship with existing global and regional instruments. The workshop was attended by some 25 participants from 18 African Member States. A seminar session allowed experts in nuclear security to share knowledge and information on relevant issues, and there were additional expert briefings on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, including insights on the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the group of governmental experts over the period 2014–2015 and the expert preparatory group. A final session was devoted to the relevance of such a treaty for the region.

18. The Centre supported Member States in their efforts to implement instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction, including Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-State actors. At the request of the Government of Mauritania, the Centre organized a country visit from 4 to 6 July 2017 to assist in the drafting of its initial national report. More than 22 participants took part in the event, including representatives of the ministries responsible for the interior, trade and investment, foreign affairs, defence, justice, health and agriculture, as well as the defence forces, the police service, the financial intelligence unit, customs and intelligence authorities, the National Authority for Radiation Protection, Safety and Nuclear Security and civil society. Following the workshop, Mauritania drafted its initial report on the implementation of the resolution. The workshop also enabled an analysis to be made of needs for further assistance. The Centre also provided assistance, at their request, to Madagascar and Mali to prepare and successfully file requests for assistance to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

D. Information and outreach

19. The Centre participated in the preparation and organization of capacity development workshops on young people, peace and security in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, funded by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Two workshops were held, one in Lomé from 1 to 3 March 2018 and the other in Ouagadougou from 8 to 10 March. In each country, 25 youth organizations, including faith-based groups, political parties and the national youth council, were represented, for a total of 100 participants. The workshops were aimed at raising awareness of the essential role of young people in sustaining peace, and the various avenues through which they could constructively engage in peacebuilding processes. The Centre delivered training sessions on issues relating to disarmament, peace education and preventing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The youth representatives also discussed Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security and its interconnection with the 2030 Agenda.

20. At the request of the Catholic University of West Africa, the Centre organized a working visit of master's students in public law from the University to the Centre's offices, giving them the opportunity to learn about issues relating to disarmament and to interact with staff. The visit also served to encourage them to consider a career in the area of preventive diplomacy, peace and security. Such an activity responds to the call of the Secretary-General to promote education in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation, as contained in his report on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education (A/57/124).

21. At the request of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, the Centre carried out a capacity-building exercise for its members during its annual general assembly on the topic of challenges and perspectives in relation to civil society efforts in peacebuilding. The objective was to assist the Network in repositioning itself to meet the institutional and security challenges facing the subregion. About 40 participants representing member organizations, seconded staff and representatives of the Network's subregional office in Togo were present.

22. The staff of the Centre participated in more than two dozen meetings, conferences, workshops, symposiums and other events across Africa and beyond to disseminate its mandate and activities, as well as broader United Nations activities in the areas of peace and disarmament.

23. To further institutionalize disarmament practices and expand its number of contacts and lines of communication, the Centre established databases of national

focal points on small arms and light weapons across States in Africa and of focal points among ministries for foreign affairs, the African Union, regional economic communities, other regional and subregional organizations, civil society organizations and journalists covering peace, security and disarmament across Africa.

24. The Centre's electronic newsletter, *UNREC Focus*, is distributed to more than 8,000 subscribers globally, providing information about regional disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues and the initiatives and activities of the Centre. Furthermore, information on the Centre's expertise and current projects was added to its website, available in English and French. From July 2017 to June 2018, the site recorded more than 80,000 hits.

25. The Centre continued to make use of social media platforms to disseminate information and news items and to keep users updated on regional disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

IV. Financial situation, staffing and administration

A. Financial situation

26. The Centre was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. In 2017, voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Centre were received in the amount of $1,371,740. Information on the status of the trust fund for 2017 is provided in the annex to the present report.

27. The Secretary-General expresses his gratitude to the Governments of China, France, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland and Togo, as well as the European Union, for their financial contributions. The Secretary-General expresses his particular appreciation to the Government of Togo for the provision of new and spacious premises to host the Centre and also for its long-standing support provided in its capacity as host country to the Centre.

28. The Secretary-General continues to encourage financial and in-kind contributions to the Centre from African States as a clear indication of the value that Member States attribute to the Centre's expertise and technical assistance.

29. The Secretary-General thanks all States and partners for their generous contributions to and support for the Centre and encourages their continuous and increased support commensurate with the growing challenges to human security in Africa, to enable the Centre to provide enhanced technical and capacity-building assistance to Member States in the region, in fulfilment of its mandate.

B. Staffing

30. The regular budget of the United Nations funds the posts of one Senior Political Affairs Office/Director of the Centre (P-5), one Political Affairs Officer (P-3) and two General Service staff (G-7 and G-6, Local level). Project personnel are funded through voluntary contributions. The Secretary General thanks the European Union for funding one Political Affairs Officer (P-3), three United Nations Volunteers and one General Service Assistant; the Government of Japan for funding one United Nations Volunteer and one consultant; the Government of China for funding two United Nations Volunteers and one consultant; and the Government of Canada for funding one consultant.

V. Conclusion

31. During the reporting period, the Centre continued to carry out its programmes, with the support of donors, to provide assistance to African Member States, at their request, in the areas of peace, security and disarmament and enhanced its collaboration with partners, including the African Union and other subregional organizations, with a view to achieving synergies in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in Africa.

32. The Centre assisted Member States, at their request, in strengthening their capacity to combat the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons and in implementing international instruments relating to weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism, including Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). Furthermore, the Centre engaged in activities relating to the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention and conducted outreach initiatives to raise awareness of disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

33. The sustained number of requests for assistance from Member States and regional organizations demonstrated the importance of the work of the Centre in the field of disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and security in the region. Building on its past work and expertise, the Centre continues to develop and implement new projects and activities that meet the needs of Member States on issues within its mandate. In carrying out its programme and activities, the Centre collaborated with key stakeholders, in particular the African Union, and strengthened its continental role by creating networks and partnerships at the regional and subregional levels. The Centre will continue its efforts to maximize the utilization of resources and expertise through cooperation and the sharing of experiences with partner entities in the region.

34. The Secretary-General calls upon Member States and other donors to provide the Centre with the financial and in-kind support necessary to enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate effectively in serving the needs of African Member States in the fields of peace, security and disarmament, in pursuance of Sustainable Development Goal 16, on the promotion of peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

Annex

Status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for 2017

(United States dollars)

Accumulated surplus, 1 January 2017	**466 053**
Revenue	
Voluntary contributions	1 471 740[a]
Other revenue	249 607
Investment revenue	23 882
Total revenue and prior-year adjustment	**1 745 229**
Expenses	
Operating expenses	1 823 449
Refund to donors[b]	(1 804)
Total expenses	**1 825 253**
Surplus/(deficit)	(80 024)
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	**386 029**

[a] Consists of voluntary contributions from donors as follows: European Commission, $1,436,116; France, $23,596; Togo, $12,028.

[b] Consists of a refund to Germany of $1,804.